

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06

OES-07 SP-02 SS-15 STR-05 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4998

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRASILIA 9939

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PGOV, BR, FR

SUBJECT: VISIT OF FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT, EDGAR

FAURE, TO BRAZIL

REF: BRASILIA 9217

1. THE NOVEMBER 21-22 VISIT OF FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT EDGAR FAURE TO BRASILIA AND RIO DREW PRESS ATTENTION DESPITE ITS OVERLAP WITH SECRETARY VANCE'S AND THE VISIT THE WEEK BEFORE BY VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ. FAURE'S SOJOURN -- THE SECOND HERE BY A SENIOR FRENCH OFFICIAL IN LESS THAN A MONTH (REFTEL) -- WAS UNOFFICIAL, MADE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE "ASSOCIATION DES PARLEMENTAIRES DE LANGUE FRANCAISE," RECIPROCATING THE VISIT BY FRENCH-SPEAKING BRAZILIAN CONGRESSMEN TO FRANCE EARLIER THIS YEAR. FAURE, NONETHELESS, MET WITH GOB OFFICIALS INCLUDING PRESIDENT GEISEL, FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA, SUPERIOR FEDERAL TRIBUNAL CHIEF JUSTICE AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS.

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2. LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE OUTSIDE FAURE'S SPEECH TO BRAZILIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES HAS EMERGED PUBLICLY FROM THE VISIT. FAURE TOLD PRESS HE HAD BROUGHT FOR BRAZILIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS A DOCUMENT DESCRIBING THE SPECIAL POWERS CONFERRED ON THE FRENCH PRESIDENT BY ARTICLE 16 OF THE FRENCH CONSTITUTION. FAURE EMPHASIZED THAT HE HAD NOT PREPARED THE STUDY TO SUGGEST CHANGES TO THE BRAZILIAN CONSTITUTION, BUT OFFERED IT AS AN OBSERVER. IN HIS

ADDRESS TO CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, FAURE STRESSED LONG TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND BRAZIL AND CURRENT STRONG BONDS OF CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COOPERATION. CENTRAL THEME OF FAURE'S SPEECH TO DEPUTIES, HOWEVER, WAS THAT GOVERNMENT IN DANGER FROM "LESS SCRUPULOUS ADVERSARIES" COULD TAKE ACTIONS OUTSIDE ITS NORMAL SYSTEM TO PRESERVE THE GOVERNMENT'S EXISTENCE. CONCURRENTLY WITH REPORTING ON FAURE'S SPEECH TO BRAZILIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, O ESTADO PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW WITH FAURE IN FRANCE JUST BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE IN WHICH HE COMMENTED ON ARTICLE 16. O ESTADO STRESSED FAURE'S ASSERTION THAT ARTICLE 16 DID NOT GIVE FRENCH PRESIDENT TOTALLY DISCRETIONARY POWERS NOR COULD HE VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT ALSO REPORTED LENGTHY FAURE COMMENTARY ABOUT NEED FOR POWERS CONTAINED IN ARTICLE 16. THE COMBINATION OF (1) O ESTADO'S INTERVIEW WITH FAURE HIGHLIGHTING COMMENTS ON ARTICLE 16, (2) THE SUBSTANCE OF FAURE'S CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES SPEECH, AND (3) FAURE'S INDICATION HE HAD BROUGHT A STUDY OF ARTICLE 16 FOR BRAZILIAN CONGRESSMEN, LED TO INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS BETWEEN ARTICLE 16 AND BRAZILIAN INSTITUTIONAL ACT NO 5. PRESS COVERAGE TENDED TO GIVE FAURE THE APPEARANCE OF AN APOLOGIST FOR AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT.

3. FRENCH EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER TOLD US HE ATTRIBUTED PUBLIC-ITY ABOUT FAURE'S COMMENTS ON ARTICLE 16 TO OVERSEALOUS PRESS, BUT ADDED IT WAS PROBABLY GOOD THING FOR BRAZILIANS TO REALIZE THAT A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY COULD HAVE BOTH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PRESIDENT AS WELL AS SAFEGUARDS PROTECTING GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS. HE ADDED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF BRAZILIAN PRO-GOVERNMENT PARTY ARENA WERE DISPLEASED BY PRESS FOCUS ON FAURE'S ARTICLE 16 COMMENTS BECAUSE IT FURTHER FUELED DEBATE HERE ABOUT REFORMS. OPPOSITION MDB MEMBERS WERE ALSO ALLEGED BY FRENCH EMBOFF TO HAVE BEEN DISPLEASED BECAUSE FAURE, S A FOREIGNER, SEEMED TO BE EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT. JOHNSON

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